

DC
VERTIGO

1 of 6
NOV 94
\$2.95 US
\$4.25 CAN
£2.00 UK
SUGGESTED
FOR MATURE
READERS

Shadow's Fall



John Ney Rieber John Van Fleet

Shadows Fall

A Severed Life in Six Acts

John Ney Rieber

writer

John Van Fleet

illustrator

John Costanza

letterer

SHADOWS FALL Number 1,
November 1994, published by DC Comics.
Copyright © 1994 John Ney Rieber and
John Van Fleet. All Rights Reserved.

All characters, their distinctive
likenesses and related indicia are
trademarks of John Ney Rieber and
John Van Fleet. Vertigo is a trademark
of DC Comics. The stories, characters
and incidents featured in this
publication are entirely fictional.

DC Comics, 1325 Avenue of the
Americas, New York, NY 10019.

A division of Warner Bros. —
A Time Warner Entertainment Company.
Printed in Canada.
First Printing.

DC COMICS

JENETTE KAHN

President & Editor-in-Chief

PAUL LEVITZ

Executive VP & Publisher

KAREN BERGER

Executive Editor

ART YOUNG

Editor

TIM PILCHER

Assistant Editor

JOE ORLANDO

VP-Creative Director

TOM BALLOU

VP-Advertising

BRI CE BRISTOW

VP-Sales & Marketing

PATRICK CALDOY

VP-Finance & Operations

TERRI CUNNINGHAM

Managing Editor

CHANTAL d'AVENIS

VP-Business Affairs

LILLIAN LASERSON

VP & General Counsel

SEYMOUR MILES

VP-Associate Publisher

BOB ROZAKIS

Executive Director-Production

Seventeen years ago, Warren Gale made a choice that cost him his soul. Vengeful, ravenous, his soul has since driven thousands to suicide—while Gale's own life has become inhumanly comfortable. Predictable. Safe.

But the bond between a man and his soul can never be completely severed. Warren Gale's peaceful sleep is about to become a theatre of nightmare...

Here. Now. As shadows fall.

Act One:

ABSENCE MAKES THE HEART

CAST:

(in order of appearance)

The Shadow:

Warren Gale's cast-off soul, an engineer and connoisseur of suicides.

Renee, Queen Solitaire:

A homeless schizophrenic woman who believes herself to be the most fortunate of queens.

Warren Gale:

A man who has been without a soul for seventeen years and never suspected its absence.

Shen:

An enigmatic follower of the Light, whose instincts are of the Dark.



GIVE ME

GIVE ME
YOUR POOR



YOUR HUDDLED
MASSES

YEARNING TO
BREATHE FREE



THE WRETCHED
REFUSE

OF YOUR TEEMING
SHORES



SEND THESE
THE HOMELESS

TEMPEST-TOSSED



TO ME

FROM THE TENEMENT STEPS
WHERE THE GRIME MEN SPRAWL
LIKE SHIPWRECK VICTIMS
WASHED UP ON SOME CONCRETE
SHORE

TO THE ROOFTOP
GARDENS WHERE THE
BLACK RAIN FALLS
AND NOTHING BUT
NOTHING THRIVES

THIS LAND IS YOUR LAND

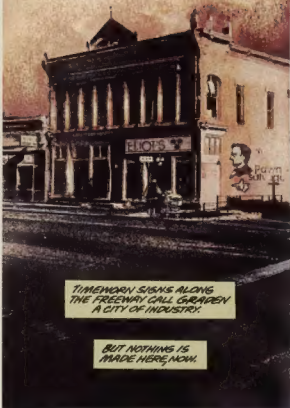
THIS LAND IS MY LAND



ONCE THIS WAS THE HEART
OF A SMALL TOWN.

BUT THE TOWN HAS
BECOME A CITY--

AND THE CITY
HAS NO HEART.



TIMEWORN SIGNS ALONG
THE FREEWAY CALL GRADEN
A CITY OF INDUSTRY.

BUT NOTHING IS
MADE HERE NOW.

NOTHING BUT
PROMISES.

IT'S
BEAUTIFUL,
TOMMY--
ISN'T IT?
SOMEDAY...

SOMEDAY
WHAT,
RENEE?

YOU'RE
TEASING ME,
TOMMY. THAT'S
SWEET.

YOU
KNOW.

EVERYONE
KNOWS ABOUT
MY PRINCE.



I HAVE
SOMETHING
FOR YOU.

BECAUSE
YOU'RE SO
SWEET.



SHE HAS TO BE CAREFUL.
VERY CAREFUL.

SHE MUSTN'T GET HER
GLOVES DIRTY.

SOMETIMES SHE WANTS
JUST TO GIVE UP.



AIN'T NO ROLEX,
BUT I CAN MAYBE
DO SOMETHING
WITH IT...

LOOKS NICE,
RENEE... WHERE
YOU FIND IT?

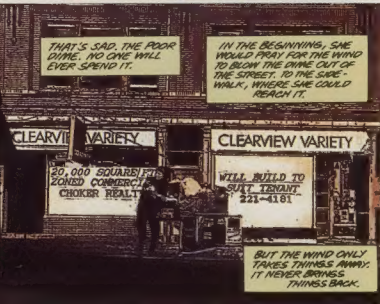
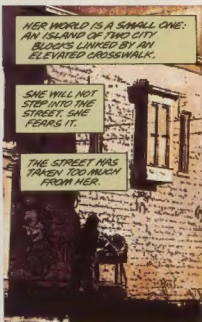
IN THE
GROUND.

I KNOW
WHERE THINGS
ARE.



IT
RUN?

ITS TIME
CAN'T GET
AWAY.



QUEEN'S Baking Co.



NEVER
MIND.

NOT
EVERYTHING
IS SAD.

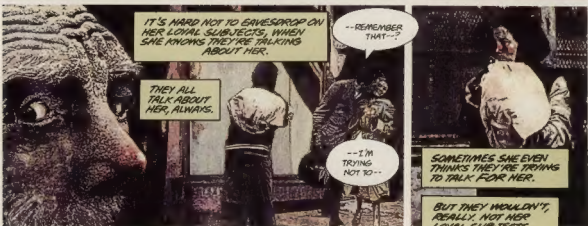


SOME THINGS
ARE BEAUTIFUL.
WONDERFUL.

TAKE IT FROM QUEENIE...
IT'S THE Lightest
IT'S THE Softest
IT'S THE Wildest
IT'S THE Best!

I POSED FOR HIM,
QUEENIE. I POSED FOR
HIM AND HE PAINTED YOU
AND WE LOOK THE SAME,
EVERYONE SAYS. THAT
MAKES US TWINS.

HAPPY
BIRTHDAY, DEAR
QUEENIE. HAPPY
BIRTHDAY TO US.



SHE BLESSES HER LOYAL
SUBJECTS. SHE LOVES
THEM ALL. SHE FORGIVES
THEM ALL.

SHE KNOWS THAT TOMORROW
IS THE DAY WHEN THEY WILL
UNITE TO OVERTHROW HER
ENEMIES AND RESTORE
HER TO HER THRONE.

HER PRINCE, RETURNED,
WILL LEAD THEM.

AND SHE WILL ORDER ALL THE
BLACK ROADS TORN UP, AND
THE OLD ROADS WILL BE
UNCOVERED.

AND SHE WILL BE ABLE TO
FIND HER WAY HOME AGAIN.



PERHAPS HE WAS AT THE CHURCH
ALREADY, WAITING FOR HER.

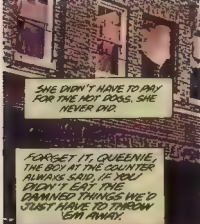
HER
PRINCE.



POOR SWEET PRINCE. NOW
HE MUST HAVE SUFFERED,
SEPARATED FROM HER
FOR SO LONG.



SHE'D BETTER BUY TWO HOT
DOGS TONIGHT. IN CASE HE'S
HUNGRY. TWO HOT DOGS WITH
EVERYTHING.

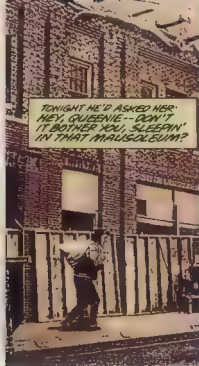


SHE DIDN'T HAVE TO PAY
FOR THE HOT DOGS. SHE
NEVER DID.

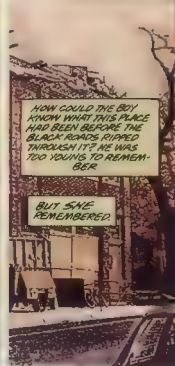
FORGET IT, QUEENIE,
THE BOY AT THE COUNTER
ALWAYS SAID, IF YOU
DIDN'T EAT THE
DAMNED THINGS WE'D
JUST HAVE TO THROW
EM AWAY.



HE WAS SO
SWEET.

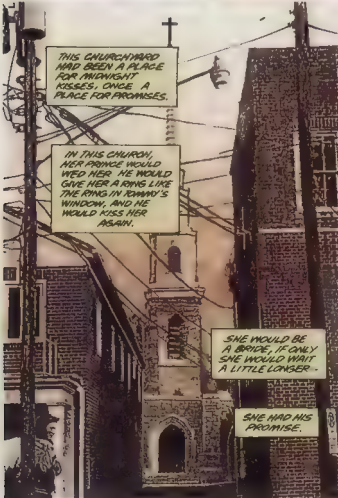


TONIGHT HE'D ASKED HER
HEY, QUEENIE-- DON'T
IT BOTHER YOU, SLEEPIN'
IN THAT MAUSOLEUM?



HOW COULD THE BOY
KNOW WHAT THIS PLACE
HAD BEEN BEFORE THE
BLACK ROADS RIPPED
THROUGH IT? HE WAS
TOO YOUNG TO REMEM-
BER.

BUT SHE
REMEMBERED.



THIS CHURCHYARD
HAD BEEN A PLACE
FOR MIDNIGHT
KISSES, ONCE A
PLACE FOR PROMISES.

IN THIS CHURCH,
HER PRINCE WOULD
WED HER. HE WOULD
GIVE HER A RING LIKE
THE RING IN ROMMY'S
WINDOW, AND HE
WOULD KISS HER
AGAIN.

SHE WOULD BE
A BRIDE, IF ONLY
SHE WOULD WAIT
A LITTLE LONGER..

SHE HAD HIS
PROMISE.



BUT WHY DID
THAT BOY'S
QUESTION--

MAKE HER
FEEL SO--

ANGRY--





AT 5:00, HIS TIME IS HIS OWN AGAIN



THE CLIP
AGENCY PAYS BY
THE HOUR,
AFTER ALL.

A TEN-MINUTE WAIT FOR THE
BUS. A TEN-MINUTE RIDE ON IT.



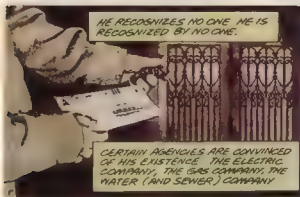
A FIVE-MINUTE
WALK FROM THE
KIDEX ON TURNER
AVENUE

AS HE WALKS HE
PASSES PEOPLE --
MAYBE NEIGHBORS,
MAYBE NOT



WOMEN WHO KNOT BRIGHT
SCARVES OVER DRAB HAIR,
MEN WHOSE WORN FACES
BELIE DEFIANT EYES.

HE RECOGNIZES NO ONE. HE IS
RECOGNIZED BY NO ONE.



CERTAIN AGENCIES ARE CONVINCED
OF HIS EXISTENCE: THE ELECTRIC
COMPANY, THE GAS COMPANY, THE
WATER (AND SEWER) COMPANY

EVEN THE PHONE COMPANY
CONCEDES, EACH MONTH,
THAT GALE, WARREN
IS REAL



HE IS LISTED IN THE
DIRECTORY; HE HAS A
PHONE, AFTER ALL.

LAST MONTH, IT RANG.

STARTLED, HE
HAD AGREED TO
BUY THE
INSURANCE.

HOME.

AT 5:30.

WHERE DOES THE TIME
GO? HE HAD WORKED
IT OUT ONCE, ADDING
THE MINUTES UP. HE
OUGHT TO ARRIVE AT
5:25...

THAT WAS LIFE FOR
YOU. ONE MYSTERY
AFTER ANOTHER.

BEEF
OR
CHICKEN?

YESTERDAY
HE'D HAD
BEEF.

THE DAY BEFORE
YESTERDAY,
HE'D HAD BEEF.

TODAY?

BEEF

JUST THE
THING.

TING

THAT WAS
GOOD.

FUNNY HOW SLEEPY
YOU GET AFTER YOU
EAT.

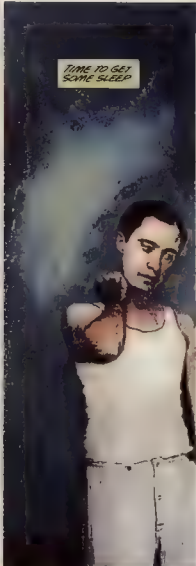
ANOTHER OF LIFE'S
LITTLE MYSTERIES.



IT'S TIME

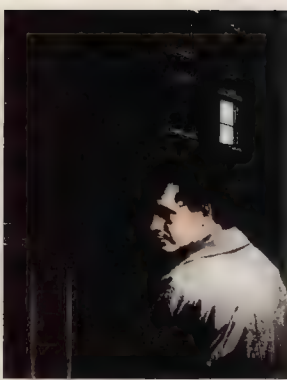


TIME TO GET
SOME SLEEP



TIME TO CATCH A
LITTLE SHUTEYE





The man
sleeps

It is simply
a matter of
time until the
kuei appears

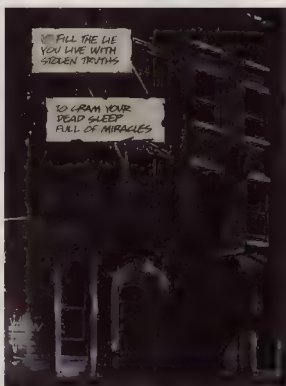
How many lives
has it now taken?
Only the Kuei
knew

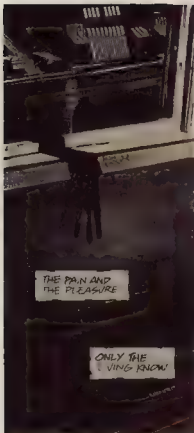


SO many suicides were
misconstrued as
accidental deaths

For all its
savagery, the
Kuei is a
subtle killer

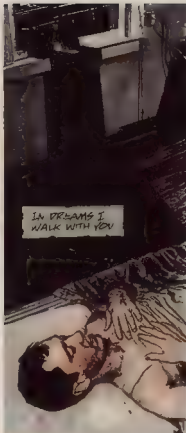
The
Kuei...





THE PAIN AND
THE PLEASURE

ONLY THE
VING KNOW



IN DREAMS I
WALK WITH YOU



I SHOW YOU THE WAY

THE HUNT THE NIGHT



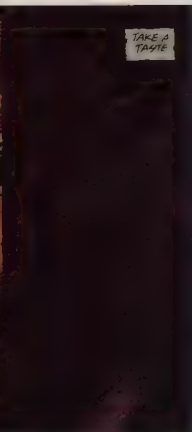
SINCE LAST WE SHARED
I HAVE TAKEN FIVE

FOUR WERE LITTLE
MORE THAN SHELLS
DRY AND TASTELESS SELVES
FOUR WERE NOTHING
TO ALLEVATE MY HUNGER




BUT ONE WAS
PRIME CUT
ONE WAS
SOMEONE

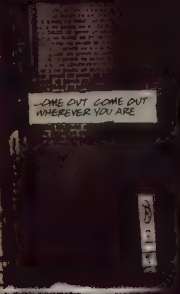
COME ON
DALE



TAKE A
TASTE



THIS DREAM IS OUR DREAM BROTHER
WHERE WILL YOU HIDE FROM US



...COME OUT COME OUT
WHEREVER YOU ARE



COME OUT
AND PLAY



I'VE MISSED
YOU GAVE

NO ONE IS AS
GOOD IN BED
AS YOU ARE



SO
SHY

PRETENDING
YOU DON'T
KNOW

WE WERE MADE
FOR EACH OTHER

WHY DON'T WE SLIP
INTO SOMEONE
COMFORTABLE

I TOOK HER
YESTERDAY

FOR U

SHE TOUGH AND
I KNEW HER

SHE WOULD NOT SURRENDER. SHE
COULD NOT, WHILE THE WORLD
STILL PROMISED HER SO MUCH
OF BEAUTY AND OF GOOD



WHILE THE
WORLD STILL
PROMISED
HER LOVE

THESE TIMES WERE
HARD FOR EVERYONE
SO MANY HAD GIVEN UP

SO MANY HAD SOLD
OUT AND MOVED ON...
AND LOST EVERYTHING
THAT REALLY MATTERED



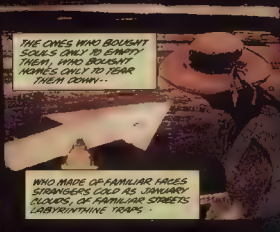


NO MATTER.

SHE WOULD NOT
FORSAKE THE
DREAM ..




THE
LOVELINESS



THE ONES WHO BOUGHT
SOULS ONLY TO EMPTY
THEM, WHO BOUGHT
HOMES ONLY TO TEAR
THEM DOWN ..


WHO MADE OF FAMILIAR FACES
STRANGERS COLD AS JANUARY
CLOUDS, OF FAMILIAR STREETS
LABYRINTHINE TRAPS .



THEY WOULD NEVER LURE
HER FROM HER SANCTUARY

CLEARVIEW VARIETY

RENEE, QUEEN SOLITARY,
WOULD NEVER STEP INTO
THE STREET



IF SHE LEFT, HOW
WOULD HER PRINCE
FIND HER?

WHEN HE
RETURNED.



TONIGHT

OR TOMORROW
TOMORROW AT
THE LATEST.

BUT PLEASE,
GOD, PLEASE--

LET IT BE
TONIGHT



GOD KNEW THAT SHE WAS
CONSIDERATE AND KIND TO
ALL THE SUFFERING ONES
SHE WATCHED THEM AS GOD
WATCHED THE LITTLE BIRDS.

SHE LOVED THEM ALL SHE
FORGAVE THEM ALL. SHE
WAS NEVER ANGRY WITH
THEM GOD KNEW THAT.

HER ANGER WAS FOR THE ONES WHO HAD COVERED
THE WORLD WITH BLACK ROADS OF FORGETTING
THE ONES WHO HAD WITH ENGINE NOISE AND
FLUME AND GLARE USURPED THE GREEN GRASS
PLACES

WON'T HAVE ANYMORE
FROM HER

WON'T HAVE ANYMORE
FROM ALL THESE
MONTHS

PLEASE,
GOD,
PLEASE--

PLEASE



IT'S TIME TIME TO

WAKE UP LITTLE
SUSIE WAKE UP

DON'T HANG
AROUND THE
NEIGHBORHOOD
THE ONLY

PRINCE RANDY WON'T
BE MAKING IT TONIGHT
EITHER

YOU SEE RENEE
IT'S LIKE THIS

MONDAY'S HIS NIGHT TO TAKE
CARE OF THE KIDS WHILE NORA
HEADS DOWN TO THE BEAUTY
PARLOR

ON MONDAYS JULIETTE'S
HOUSE OF BEAUTY DOES HER
NAILS FOR FREE WHILE
HER FACIAL MASK SETS

YOU KNOW THOSE MARKS
WORK WONDERS
TO LOOK AT NORA YOU'D
NEVER KNOW SHE'S HAD
THREE KIDS

YOU SEE SHE
WOULDN'T "GO
AWAY" AND FIX
IT" LIKE YOU
DID WHEN RANDY
KNOCKED HER
UP


SHE WASN'T AS
UNDERSTANDING
AS YOU WERE
AND HER DADDY
HAD A SHOTSUN

YOU UNDERSTAND WHY
YOU WEREN'T INVITED
TO THE WEDDING OR
THE CHRISTENINGS


959 WAS A GOOD
YEAR MONEY
BUT IT'S HISTORY
IT'S THROUGH AND
IF RANDY HAS TIME
ON HIS HANDS NOW
SUGAR NONE OF IT'S

DO
BAD


YOU WOULD HAVE
LOVED THE KIDS



CHARLIE AND SANDRA ARE THE LOOKERS IN THE FAMILY




BUT WHAT THE HELL RENEE



JOHN YOU KNOW TAKES AFTER THE OLD MAN


LOOKS AREN'T
EVERYTHING
ARE THEY?



THERE NOW GALE
WHAT DID I TELL YOU?
WASN'T SHE JUST
GOOD ENOUGH TO EAT?

BUT ALL GOOD DREAMS
MUST COME TO AN END

BEERBEER



SO SWEET BROTHER
AGAIN I LEAVE YOU

I WONDER
AS I GO


AS YOU GO ABOUT
YOUR DAY GALE

DO YOU EVER
MISS YOUR SOUL?




ONE DAY
GALE

WE WILL BE
ONE AGAIN




The first night of my
Vain ends with mystery
How can this be?

The Kuei departs
when morning
comes -



Leaving the man alive



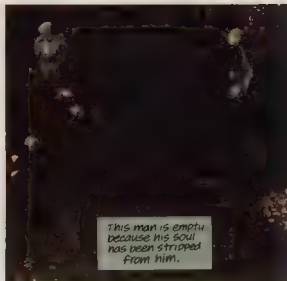
Alive? Is he alive?

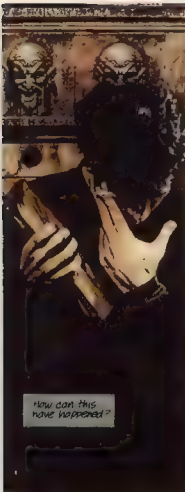


He lives, but
he is empty

A shell
A husk







How can this
have happened?



From the knowledge
of beginnings--

Endings may
be shaped



Give me, then--
insight.



Let me say
lost truth

Blood it begins
with blood--



Blood
of an
innocent

And from that
beginning--so
much, Oh Gods--
so much blood
flows.



The Kree is a vampire. It kills to live. It lives to kill.

But what of the man? Does he know that he has a killer for a soul?



Does he take pleasure in the dreams the shadow brings him? Or does he fear?

Before I execute him, I will learn.



FEEL LIKE WORKING, GALE? YOU GOT A SEARCH.

GUY ASKED ESPECIALLY FOR YOU.

GOD KNOWS WHY.

SURPRISE. 1977 TO TODAY. CITY PAPERS ONLY.



"HEY, YOU GOT THAT, OR YOU WANT ME TO WRITE IT DOWN FOR YOU?"

"HEY--GALE! EARTH TO GALE. COME IN, GALE. JESUS, GALE! WAKE THE HELL UP!"

IN THE STACKS, SECONDS
BECOME HOURS; HOURS
BECOME DAYS...

AND THE DAYS ACCUMULATE
ON DUSTY SHELVES, IMPARTING
TO THE AIR THE STALENESS OF
YELLOWED PAPER, FADED INK...

FORGOTTEN
LIVES.

HERE. THE FIRST.

THE COP. ON THE
PAGE BESIDE HER--

BESIDE--

HE'D ALMOST
FORGOTTEN THAT
DAMNED COP.

HE HAD
KILLED
HIMSELF,
HADN'T HE?

SO
WHAT.

HE'D DESERVED TO
DIE FOR WHAT HE'D
DONE.

FORGET HIM,
THEN. SET IT
ALL ASIDE.
START WITH
ANOTHER DAY.

ANOTHER DAY--

ANOTHER
SUICIDE?

ANOTHER,
SO SOON?



AND WITHIN
THE WEEK--
THREE MORE
HAD CHOSEN
DEATH.



WHY?



NO REASON.

WHAT REASON
COULD THERE BE?

YOU COULD GIVE YOURSELF
A HEADACHE TRYING TO
FIGURE OUT WHY PEOPLE
DID THINGS.



PEOPLE JUST
DID THINGS,
THAT WAS ALL.

WITH OR WITHOUT
REASONS.



GOD. HIS HANDS
WERE FILTHY.

WOULDN'T YOU
KNOW THERE'D
BE NO SOAP.

THE
HUNT



NO SOAP.

ANYWHERE.

End act one